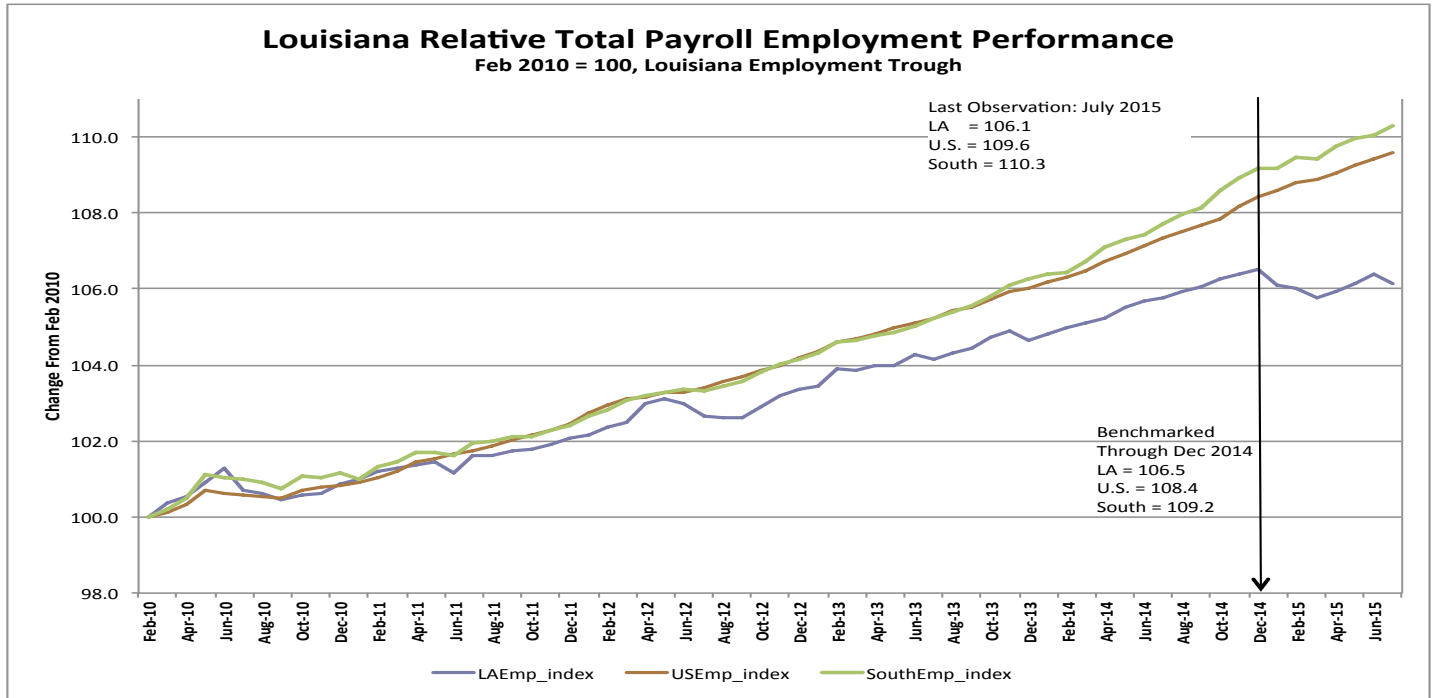


# RELATIVE EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE, July 2015



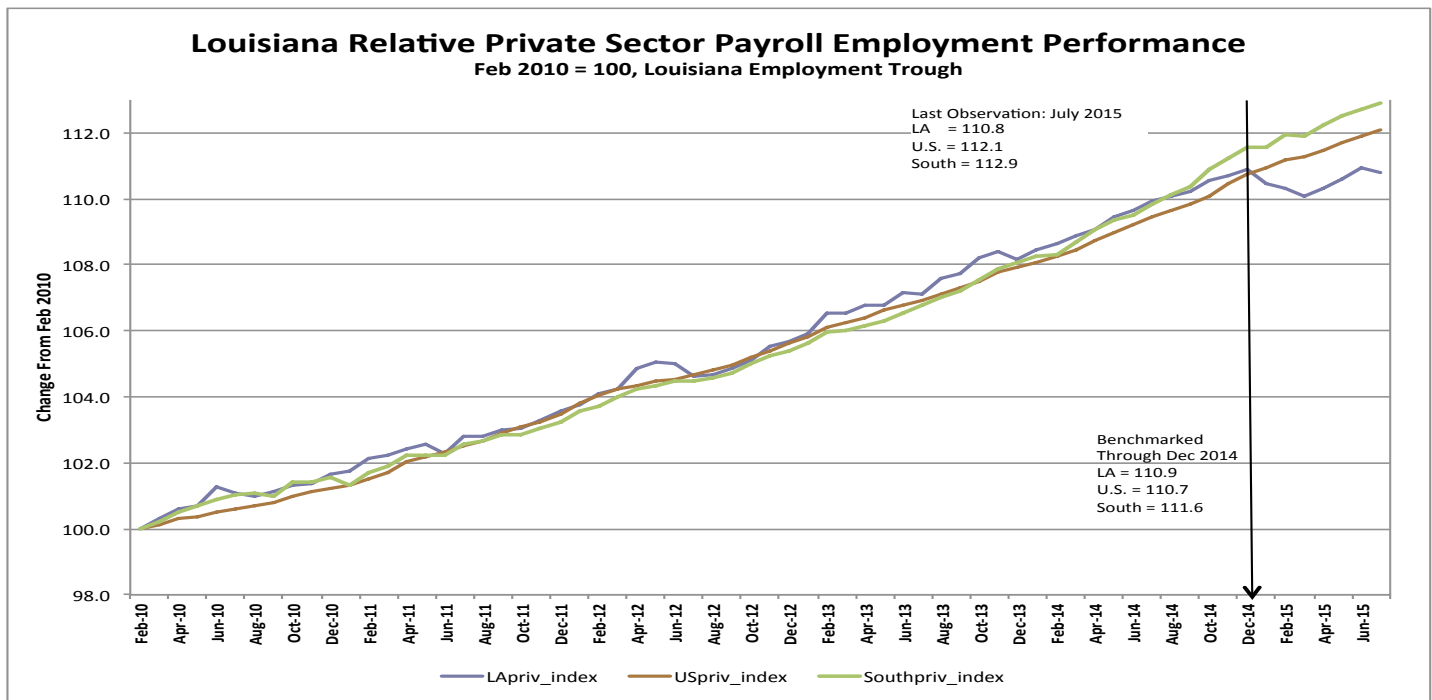
Numerous metrics can be used to compare economic performance across states. Here is displayed one of the more important metrics, total payroll employment; the headline employment measure reported for the national economy and for all states on a monthly basis. The graph above depicts total payroll employment for the state, the nation as a whole, and the South<sup>1</sup> as a whole. In this graph, monthly seasonally adjusted total payroll employment for all three regions is indexed to the month of February 2010, when the state's payroll employment total was at its low point resulting from the 2008-09 national recession. The months subsequent to that trough month reflect the economic recovery from that recession. The value of each line at any month represents the percent change of that region's total payroll employment from the month of February 2010. By July 2015 the state's total payroll employment was 6.1% greater than in February 2010. By comparison, total payroll employment for the south was 10.3% greater, and for the nation as a whole 9.6% greater.

Of note in this graph is the State's relatively weak total payroll employment performance. Over the course of the economic recovery to date, total payroll employment growth in Louisiana has been approximately 36% less than that of the national economy and 40% less than the South. Since the data for the months of 2015 are based on sample surveys of employers that have not yet been annually benchmarked to a near complete census of employers, and are less reliable than earlier data that has been benchmarked, the growth through December 2014 is also noted in the graph. Through that point of the recovery, the state's total payroll employment was 6.5% greater than in February 2010. By comparison, total payroll employment for the nation as a whole was 8.4% greater, and for the South as a whole 9.2% greater. By that point, total payroll employment growth in Louisiana had been approximately 23% less than that of the national economy, and 29% less than that of the South.

This relatively lagging total performance is largely the result of disproportionately large reductions in government sector payrolls in Louisiana relative to the nation and the South overall. To illustrate this, a graph of private sector payroll growth is included below.

<sup>1</sup> In this case the south constitutes the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics southeast region of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, plus the states of Arkansas and Louisiana.

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The graph above depicts private sector payroll employment for the state, the South, and the nation as a whole. Government payroll employment has been excluded from all three regions. All other components of this graph are the same as before. Monthly seasonally adjusted private sector payroll employment for all three regions is indexed to the month of February 2010, when the state's payroll employment total was at its low point resulting from the 2008-09 national recession. The months subsequent to that trough month reflect the economic recovery from that recession. The value of each line at any month represents the percent change of that region's private sector payroll employment from the month of February 2010. By July 2015 the state's private sector payroll employment was 10.8% greater than in February 2010. By comparison, private sector payroll employment for the South was 12.9% greater, and for the nation as a whole was 12.1% greater.

Of note in this graph is the fact that over much of this time span the State's private sector payroll employment performance has been comparable to that of the nation as a whole and the South as well. However, as of the current point in the economic recovery, cumulative private sector payroll employment growth in Louisiana has been about 11% less than that of the national economy, and about 16% less than that of the South. Relative growth performance through December 2014 is also noted in the graph. Through that point of the recovery, the state's private sector payroll employment performance had been about 1% more than that of the national economy, but about 6% less than that of the South. While relative positions can change from month to month, over the course of the recovery from the 2008-09 national recession, Louisiana has not exhibited sustained private sector employment growth in excess of the South or the nation as a whole.

It is notable that Louisiana appears to have taken a distinct dip in both private sector and total employment growth in January 2015. While the reliability of monthly data in the current year may be less than that of benchmarked data for months in the previous years, this dip appears to be only faintly exhibited in the South as a whole, and unnoticeable at the national economy level. It isn't obvious why the data on current months would be disproportionately more unreliable for Louisiana alone, but data for a single small state like Louisiana is likely to exhibit more volatility than that for broader regional and national areas.